

A Follow-Up Regarding the Enhanced Wake Ordinance

July 24, 2025

It's been a few weeks since the Lake Redstone wake enhancement survey results were released. Here is the latest about what is going on regarding any ordinance.

On Monday July 14th, the Town of La Valle Board met for their regular monthly town board meeting. Several people spoke on the wake enhancement equipment topic and to "officially" present the results of the Lake Redstone Wake Surfing Survey. The survey was developed and administered by the Friends of Redstone, and co-sponsored by the Lake Redstone Property Owners' Association (LRPOA), per the Safety responsibility in their mission. The Lake Redstone Protection District (LRPD) was not involved in the development nor administration of the survey.

Jane Mahoney presented the survey results of 1025 property owners. It showed that 80% favor the LRPD's proposal from last fall for the non-use of wake enhancement equipment for wake surfing (not the wake boats themselves) vs. the Redstone Watersports Club proposed ordinance for limited use. Jane also introduced the transparent and high integrity process to develop, review, administer, and open/tabulate the surveys. All survey related documents are on the home page of LRPOA website <https://www.lakeredstonepoa.com/>.

Ken Kidd described the survey process in more detail, with focus on the 13 citizen volunteers that were not part of the LRPD Board, nor on the LRPOA Board, nor in the "Friends of Lake Redstone" core group, nor on the Redstone Watersports Club Board. The day after surveys were due, they performed the public opening and tabulating of the 571 survey response envelopes at Redstone's North End Tavern and typed up the 377 comments. Following that, an AI Summary of comments was run to help understand the main themes of the comments.

Jana Burg spoke and correlated how the survey results compared favorably to other wake enhancement equipment-related surveys that were done around the state, as reported by the media. She also reported a favorable comparison to the DNR survey performed in 2024 with the state-wide and Sauk Co-specific results.

Jill Messmer addressed what is understood to be an important misconception held by some of the Town of La Valle Board members. She described from her own experience and with impactful pictures, how waves from wake surfing are very different from waves that other high horsepower engines produce on typical busy days. Why are they called Wake boats if their waves are no different than those produced by other large boats with large engines? Why would someone pay 2-5x more for such boats vs. other large boats with large engines?

Russ Burg showed a map of Lake Redstone indicating that the area proposed by the Watersports Club contains large areas of less than 20 feet in depth. He also showed how there is very little surface of Lake Redstone on which to legally wake surf if there is an ordinance requiring wake boats be 400 feet from shore and truly be in more than 20 feet of water.

A letter was read to the Board and audience that came from a DNR representative. It gave Chief Astle, preliminary comment on the 400 feet/20 foot/180-degree aspects of the ordinance that was proposed by the Watersports Club in May. The preliminary feedback was that the 20-foot minimum depth would be hard to enforce, as would be a 180-degree turn. It was stated that the 400-foot minimum would be enforceable. No comment was made in the email from the DNR regarding what the DNR is allowed and not allowed to comment on. E.g. They are only allowed to comment on enforceability, and thus not allowed to comment on water quality and people impacts of proposed ordinances. Further comment from the DNR is expected.

Important note: Contrary to popular belief, but per state statutes, the DNR can only comment and make recommendations on proposed ordinances. They cannot "approve" proposed Town ordinances.

The La Valle Town Board approved the consideration of a third potential ordinance for a wake enhancement. This ordinance would allow wake surfing at 400 feet minimum from any shore regardless of depth.

Throughout the state, some municipalities are on "on hold" regarding in-process wake enhancement ordinances. 57 municipalities have adopted wake enhancement ordinances but a recent lawsuit in the Town of Scott in northwest Wisconsin has challenged the right of a municipality to set an ordinance regarding wake enhancement equipment.

The Town of La Valle is one of the municipalities "on hold" pending the outcome of that lawsuit. Further updates will be made as they are known.